

Education for Autonomy at the Child Education Center (CEC) in the city of São Paulo, Brazil

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Abstract — This article is the result of a post - doctoral research, developed in a Child Education Center (CEC), part of the Unified Educational Center (UEC) Butantã in the city of São Paulo, in a partnership between a national university (Mackenzie, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil) and two international Universities (Siegen University and University of Alanus, both from Germany). The central objective was to show by the direct observation of the researcher during the school routine, how children from 0 to three years and eleven months of age, appropriate the different and multiple architectural spaces of the educational, sports and cultural complex through experiences and the play, where they discover and appropriate the world around them, expanding their creative capacity. The training of teachers in service, the planning of activities by teachers has a dialogical character. Thus, the child is heard in its entirety, and work permeated by Freirian concepts, such as respect, ethics, humility, sensitivity, and utopia. The methodology used encompassed field research, through the observation of children in their daily activities, semi-structured interviews with teachers and management and conversation with the children. (with appropriate terms belonging to the ethics committee - TCLE and TALE). Also, by analyzing documents, such as school projects, Political Pedagogical Projects (PPPs), and a bibliographic survey.

I. INTRODUCTION

The child must be considered as a social actor, as he is a citizen with rights and an emancipated subject in training. Childhood is a social category responsible for the socio-historical construction which constitutes our second semantic field. There is no single or universal childhood. Its meaning can change according to the culture or even the historical moment.

In this context, there is a need to research the complexity and uniqueness of the concepts of child and childhood, as the concepts of child and childhood that we have will structure the entire pedagogical practice.

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Over the centuries, children were seen as unimportant individuals, unable to produce history, without care, a fact that made the infant mortality rate extremely high.

Kramer and Leite [1] approach that the change in the conception of childhood was understood as an echo of the change in the forms of organization of society, of work relationships, of the activities carried out and of the types of insertion that children have in this society.

What we care about is understanding the child from its historical, social, cultural, economic perspective.

Analyzing childhood requires a vision of wholeness, considering the child as a social subject, within a historical perspective, as a subject of rights, a producer of culture.

The child must be observed in his speech, in his behavior, in his productions and in the symbolizations of this subject.

Within this context, as a child producing knowledge, he would need spaces with ample possibilities to develop his skills; enhance learning and enter the culture built over time.

The Unified Educational Center (UEC) Butantã, opened in 2003, was the locus of postdoctoral research. With clear principles of inclusion, respect for children, their culture, it aims to promote access to this equipment for socially marginalized children, investing in popular knowledge “silenced”; within Freire's conception of collective work, the ability to listen to the other.

We understand that children are competent social actors in the construction of their social life and the lives of those around them and who act in a proper and intentional way in the times and spaces in which they find themselves, through the interactions they establish with their peers, with adults and with the society in which they are inserted.

The object of research was to analyze how the appropriation of children occurs in educational, cultural, sports, artistic and architectural spaces and the UEC space was the “stage”, where we could make our observations. Promote access to this equipment for socially marginalized children, invest in this popular “silenced” knowledge; within Freire's conception of collective work, the ability to listen to the other and participatory management, it brings UEC residents together and among themselves. We understand that children are and should be studied as competent social actors in the construction of their social life and the lives of those around them and who act in their own and intentional way in the times and spaces in which they find themselves, through the interactions they establish with their children. peers, with adults and with the society in which they are inserted.

The research was based on authors such as Paulo Freire, Walter Benjamin, William A. Corsaro, Milton Santos, Lev Vygotsky and others who enhance the importance of relationships, the practice of freedom, autonomy, care to give voice and time to children, making them protagonists of their apprenticeship.

The initial hypothesis that the child appropriates the educational and social spaces and transforms it; at the same time that it is transformed by him, through games, games and that this interaction with different spaces

enhances learning, the exchange of knowledge and experiences was in fact proven by some aspects: joy and pleasure of children in being in that space, sharing discoveries, yearnings, fears with the class group; respect, time and voice that teachers give children; the concern of teacher training for quality education and with fair precepts.

The relevance of the research was based on the choice of UEC, precisely because it is a differentiated Educational Complex, providing more possibilities for our investigation on the appropriation of different spaces by children from CEC.

The educational principle that guides the UEC Butantã project is to provide a type of education that enables integral development for children, adolescents, youth and adults, including formal, non-formal education and socio-cultural, sports and recreational activities as forms of learning.

II. METHODOLOGY

From the collected data, we raised some categories for content analysis, as proposed by Laurence Bardin [2], by the categorical thematic analysis, where the frequency of certain themes is evoked and grouped into significant categories and formal analysis of the utterance, which marks a revealing discourse, requiring repetition, order of discourse from the researcher; gaps; of the unspoken.

We also used an instrument called *narrative map* or *cartography*, in which grouping words that were part of the observation process during the research of the group of teachers and managers, pointing out speeches, memories, affections of and among children.

Throughout the analysis of the data collected during this research, some categories were established, which will be analyzed in the next section, which bring the interviews with semi-open questions with teachers, managers, and children. By the feedback in the interview and by our observations, we understand that the space educates.

The categories raised by the researchers were: conception of the concept of child; curriculum; appropriation of space; Political Pedagogical Project (and other institutional documents); and playing.

It is worth mentioning that the professional career established by one of the researchers of this paper as a teacher in public schools at Municipality of São Paulo (PMSP, acronym in Portuguese) has provided us with challenges, searches, achievements, reflections, exchanges of experiences always and many concerns.

Thus, this research did not arise by chance; on the contrary, to understand the way in which spaces are appropriated and the relationships with the knowledge and practices established between the environment in which the five-year-old children live and how these relationships are expressed at school.

During the research, several discoveries emerged that reiterate the conception of children as a producer of knowledge. Some of these discoveries point to the child as a natural researcher, precisely because of his anxiety.

Based on conversations with teachers and managers, reading documents, projects we opted for content analysis using Bardin's approach.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this journey, it was noticed that there were born researching professors, who did not understand themselves as such. In teacher training, we even talked about being an educator, teacher, researcher. These trainings take place in the collective hours of study of teachers and there are moments of monitoring with managers and teachers to support the development of inclusive pedagogical practices based on the theoretical aspects discussed in training.

In addition, throughout the year, workshops are organized that are open to the participation of children, family members, guardians, residents of the surroundings, as well as professionals from the units' support staff.

These workshops seek to foster the strengthening of the bonds of the school community and the understanding of the importance of play for the development of all children.

I was able to observe, in the routine, interactions with respectful children on the part of the entire CEI group and incredibly positive ones that transformed the interests of these children into projects with the involvement of families and the community.

Knowing how to listen to a child goes far beyond listening to them and answering something. It is to include it, to respect it, to give a turn, the voice, to become an instrument so that it can make its dream possible. It requires a lot of patience, love and dialogue. As Freire [3] would say, fundamental knowledge is needed to program any political-pedagogical action: "change is difficult, but it is possible", assuming the ontological vocation of "being more".

Paulo Freire [4] understood and described the continuous process of humanization, initially raising the issue of human beings' ontological vocation: being more. To this vocation, Freire identified it as the humanization process of human beings. But, beside it, he presented the

distortion of that vocation, that is, the dehumanization present in the history of human beings. To overcome the dehumanization of human beings, it is necessary to educate them so that they can become aware of their condition as dehumanized beings and set out in search of their humanization.

Freire [5] states that unlike animals that are "beings in themselves", human beings are "beings for themselves". And that they are dehumanized when subjected to processes that make them "beings for the other". Freire [6] points out that human beings are not beings that only exist in the world, but are in full relationship with this world, and in this way, they are able to become aware of themselves and the world.

The conception of a child that they believe according to semi-open interviews with educators is that the child is a producer of cultures, which are created from the reality that he lives, what he feels, what he thinks and does, and I highlight: "Knowledge of a child is constituted in the interactions, therefore it is fundamental to assume our task of mediators in the educational action". (Teacher speaks).

Still in the semi - open interviews, most of the research participants point to CEU as an element that enhances experiences, exchanges of cultures, knowledge, and actions with the community. They value the coexistence that the CEU architecture itself provides, because in this way, the community respects the space that belongs to it, reducing the violence rate in the community. They reiterate that they offer social quality education to the surrounding community.

One aspect to be pointed out in these statements is the understanding that the collective space with adults and children as an educational environment aims to guarantee the right to childhood, the right to play, to express themselves in the most varied forms, allowing for a cultural exchange.

When asked about playing and the relationship with learning, they were unanimous in answering that it is playing that the child learns; interacts; exchange experiences and share with your family members, who give new views on a particular game as a feedback, putting a little bit of yourself, in what was the other's and now, it becomes everyone's.

The starting point is always what the little ones bring and what they produce among themselves by interacting with the world and thus, they carry out processes of signification. In this sense, it starts from a conception of education that sees reality as a historical, cultural, social, and plural construction, therefore dynamic, contradictory, and subject to change.

It also presupposes a theory of knowledge that has the social function of human emancipation, within a Freirian conception.

According to Freire [7] “[...] propaganda, leadership, manipulation, as weapons of domination, cannot be instruments for the reconstruction of oppressed men ... There is no other way but the practice of a humanizing pedagogy, in which the revolutionary leadership, instead of overcoming the oppressed and continuing to maintain them as almost things, he establishes a permanent dialogical relationship with them”.

The CEC/UEC space allows exchanges, dialogue, discoveries. In this sense, the choice of the locus of research was especially important to prove our initial hypotheses and validate, at the same time, a quality education.

Corroborate with Horn [8] when “[...] It is in the physical space that the child can establish relationships between the world and people, transforming it into a backdrop in which emotions are inserted [...] in this dimension, space is understood as something conjugated to the environment and vice versa. However, it is important to clarify that this relationship is not linear. Therefore, in the same space we can have different environments because the similarity between them does not mean that they are the same. They define themselves with the relationship that people build between themselves and the organized space”.

The need and importance of the interactions that occur within the spaces were evidenced, which are of great influence in the child's development and learning.

According to Vygotsky [9] "human beings grow up in a social environment and interaction with other people is essential to their development".

Thus, a stimulating environment for the child is one in which he feels safe and at the same time challenged, where he feels the pleasure of belonging to that environment and identifies with the same and especially an environment in which he can establish relationships between the pairs. Thus, it is not enough for the child to be in an organized space, but it is necessary for him to interact with this space to live it intentionally.

For Vygotsky [10] the social environment is a major factor in the construction and development of individuals.

According to Horn [11] “[...] toys have always been part of children's lives, regardless of social or cultural class in which they are inserted”.

The habit of playing is intrinsic to the child. The fact that CEU Butantã provides several spaces for the child to play and act within them, proposes new challenges that

will make the child an agent of his own learning in a more playful way.

After field observation, we can say with regard to the children of the CEC, that article 7, specifically items I, II, III, V of the Political Pedagogical Project had its objectives fulfilled: the promotion of the integral development of children.

UEC is a development hub for the territory; it is a pole of democratic, emancipatory and innovative educational experiences; and a reference center for promoting social equity in the territory.

We corroborate with Moura [12], who, when addressing the children's school space, highlights how fundamental the search for quality early childhood education is. The author adds that her planning is never neutral.

Kowaltowski [13] states that there is an influence of the architecture of the school space on learning, suggesting that the architectural and pedagogical projects should be in line with each other.

The child identifies himself with the space by elements of his culture, by gratifying experiences that happened there and by the exchange with other subjects who share the space. Then there is the appropriation of space.

The psychological effects of the appropriation of the school space reinforce the child's self-image in front of him and in front of other colleagues, developing a social sense of community. The pedagogical effects of the appropriation of the school space develop the sense of creation, expose their skills, the sense of order and the inserted aesthetic values that are nothing other than social values.

The physical context is constituted in spatialities where interactions and social relations take place. In this perspective, the construction of social identity is based on the place and environments that provide positive relationships and interactions for people.

We understand that the appropriation of these educational spaces meets the requirements of art. 3rd, where CEUs are educational spaces that consolidate the integration between education and life, ensuring the right of access to knowledge, culture, art, sports and leisure, recreation and technologies, linked to local knowledge and potential around a meaningful and socially relevant educational project for all generations, also constituting a space for organizing the popular strata through the valorization and expansion of their knowledge.

Finally, we see how children discover, make contact, experience and play in the physical space: sand, toys and the symbolic aspect; their freedom of expression, of action.

The child appropriates objects and phenomena from external reality and internalizes them through play, being able to use it in favor of his fantasies.

Currently, there is a need and relevance for children's active participation, both in research and in other social practices that are part of it. As the school is conceived as an important cultural locus in the children's lives, there is nothing more evident than the need to create pedagogical interventions that respect the children's participation rights in the entire educational process, aiming primarily at their autonomy, independence, and preparation for solving problems and conflicts in school and family life.

Investigations on childhood, education of children and their relationships, such as those of Barbosa and Horn [14], Edwards & Forman [15], Campaner et. al.[16], have emphasized the needs and potential of young children in early childhood environments, defending the right to be heard: "sensitive listening" and to participate in the educational processes that are part of it.

It is important to develop the pedagogy of listening, aimed at early childhood, in which the child is the center of pedagogical practice.

The interaction with the various UEC spaces, mediated by the teacher, establishes confidence in the appropriation of the new spaces and in the interrelationships, making the children protagonists of their development and learning process.

Playing is extremely important for the child. Enabling this space of pleasure, playfulness, expression, provoking children's actions, or reactions is a way to unveil the world and often the knots.

Benjamin [17], made some important reflections on the playfulness, considering its cultural aspect. Toy and play are associated, and document how the adult puts himself in relation to the child's world.

Benjamin's studies showed how the toy has always been an object created by the adult for the child. According to Benjamin [18], it was mistakenly believed that the imaginary content of the toy determined children's play, when in fact it is the other way around: the child does this. For this reason, the more attractive toys are, the more distant they will be from their value as instruments of play.

Through playing that the child meets the world of body and soul. He realizes how he is and receives important elements for his life, from the most insignificant habits, to determining factors of the culture of his time.

Playing, the child sees and builds the world, expresses what he finds difficult to put into words. It is by playing that the child learns that when the game is lost, the world does not end. "[...]the real, the imaginary and the

symbolic are firmly articulated in childhood and, for that, the child will have to learn something " [19]. Thus, we cannot think of childhood without playfulness, because it is through it that the connection between learning and development takes place, which is why it is impossible to deny its importance.

It is in the world of make-believe that children put the way in which they find themselves today in front of their parents, their peers, sexuality, school, objects, ideals, the symbolic. In this way they have fun (change the end), with their pain and beauty making use of fantasy to elaborate reality and find forms of subjectification in this process.

Thus, the play category is mainly a social and cultural activity and is widely used in the educational spaces of CEC.

Walking with teachers and children, we understand that the CEI has a democratic-participatory model in decision-making that occurs collectively through the search for common goals assumed by all.

Children develop their activities freely; talk to each other a lot; share knowledge; reinvent proposals pointed out by teachers.

The teachers, in turn, listen to the children, giving them time and a voice. The notion of belonging to a group is incredibly significant in social, ethical, affective, aesthetic and psychological aspects.

Children's participation and involvement in the proposed activities give the child autonomy and decision-making.

Democratic management goes beyond the decision-making process, it identifies problems, monitors and controls actions in the inspection and evaluation of results. Thus, with the democratization of management, the participation of people is increased.

According to Libâneo [20] "[...]Thus, schools can chart their own path involving teachers, students, staff, parents and the surrounding community, who become co-responsible for the institution's success. This is how the school organization becomes an educational space for collective work and learning".

As for the questions related to playing answered by the children, we understand that the experience of playing crosses different times and places: past, present and future; always marked by change and continuity.

The child, being situated in a historical and social context, incorporates the social and cultural experience of playing through the relationships he establishes with others - adults and children, through the reframing that the child brings again, with his power to imagine, create, reinvent,

and produce culture. Playing therefore involves complex processes of articulation between what is already given and what is new, between experience, memory, and imagination, between reality and fantasy.

Our observations lead us to realize that play requires learning a specific form of communication that establishes and controls a symbolic universe and the interactive space in which new meanings are being shared.

We believe that it is the informal game plan that makes it possible the construction and expansion of skills and knowledge in terms of cognition and social interactions.

The analysis of the narrative map's points to the appropriation of the CEC / UEC spaces in a pleasant way by the children. It reiterates the value of experience, the exchange between children, meetings, searches, conflict resolution. They tell a little about the observed group, their experiences, preferences and, in a way, also their dislikes. The cartographic strategy allows to escape the reproduction and repetition of oneself, making possible the singularization, the production of oneself based on new aesthetics of existence, subjectivity.

Remembering Deleuze and Guatarri [21] "[...] the map is open, can be connected in all its dimensions, dismountable, reversible, susceptible to constant changes. It can be torn, reversed, adapt to assemblies of any nature, be prepared by an individual, a group, a social formation. You can draw it on a wall, conceive it as a work of art, build it as a political action or as a meditation. One of the most important features of the rhizome is perhaps that it always has multiple entries; (...) A map has multiple entries contrary to the decal that always returns to the 'same'".

Children really take ownership of educational spaces through play and games; through the exchange of experience with its peers and mainly because it is a pole of human and social development of the community in which it is inserted, it makes them possible and as provided for in the regulations, it promotes the integration of spaces and equipment among themselves and with the general public (community and other users).

In addition, the act of playing is exposed to the social and cultural influences of the environment. The child, under this influence, assumes several roles and ends up being considered as a producer of culture.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The accomplishment of some daily tasks intentionally structured, by the teacher ensure that the routine makes the children encounter the succession of moments and what they can do in each one of them. Security and trust are the

result of routine. From the room to the other CEU spaces; the group outing, the space exploration of other environments such as theater, park, swimming pool, court.

From what I could observe in the documents and in practice with the children and teachers, we can infer that our hypothesis is correct: the different educational spaces provide meetings, exchange of experiences, develop cooperation, enable inclusion and a more pleasant, playful and healthy learning, as UEC principles, which advocate the organization of a quality public educational system; teacher training; respect for the historical inequalities in educational opportunities and human life of the population the Program serves.

The experiences in the UEC's dialogue with each other, overcoming the existing inequality through the organization of school time, the curriculum, and the occupation of the school unit by the community.

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The main research has given visibility to the concept of territory and Unified Educational Center (UEC) Butantã due to the benefits provided by the educational and social complex to students, their families, and the surrounding community.

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